

WV DOT



Today!

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We're Ready. Are You?

As Chief Engineer of District Operations, Joe Pack, points out, each time snow or icy conditions are forecast in West Virginia transportation workers work 24 hours a day in 12 hour shifts until roads are clear. That's long enough to drive to Florida, except that instead of ending up on vacation, they're on roads not yet treated, making it safer for someone else.

Everyone in WV DOT who doesn't drive a snowplow should turn to someone who does and say "Thank you."

We're going into the season of salt, and freeze, and long dark nights. We have 231,337 tons — not grains — of salt piled in our salt sheds all ready to distribute onto roads from interstates to residential streets.

Christmas is something to look forward to, and New Year's brings new hopes but in addition let's pause to say

Thank YOU to all our snow plow drivers!

Also in this Issue:

WV DOT Delivers State Christmas Tree



From Randolph County to Charleston



Cousins Chad (left) and Dustin Loudin helped move the tree.



Loading the tree in Randolph County.



Climbing Sandstone Mountain.



The tree arrives in Charleston.



Hunting season isn't the only factor threatening West Virginia's deer population. According to insurance statistics, the Mountain State leads the nation in deer strike accidents on the state's roads.

"We live in a mountainous, rural area where wildlife is prevalent," said Joe Pack, P.E. West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOT) Chief Engineer of Operations. "The more rural the area, the more likely accidents are to happen."

Between January 1, 2023, and Monday, November 20, 2023, 10,618 deer were hit on West Virginia highways, as well as 15 bears. Coyotes and other wild animals are also occasionally struck by cars on Mountain State roads.

WVDOT Today! is a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Department of Transportation's Public Relations Division. The purpose of this publication is to facilitate connection across the diverse worksites and professions represented among WVDOT employees to empower us to function as **one West Virginia Department of Transportation.**

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Drifting Mountain State Roads

West Virginia's pristine country roads were recently center stage for a motorsport event, highlighting the beauty of our state.

Drift Appalachia held an event on Pluto Road in Raleigh County on November 10 and 11, 2023. Drift Appalachia is a partnership between Drift Indy, US Drift, and Backroads of Appalachia to bring drifting to the Appalachian region.

Drifting is a driving technique by professional drivers to intentionally oversteer while maintaining control and driving the car through the entirety of a corner or turn. With many turns on the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOT) maintained roads, professional drivers were able to show off skills with beautiful scenery.

"The drivers loved it," said Perry Keller, West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) Economic Development Officer. "They think our roads are the best roads in the country for doing this because of the maintenance and upkeep done."

"The idea for the event is to bring these drivers in and have them recognize the allure of our setting and roads."

WVDOT worked with Drift Appalachia to complete an agreement to hold this event. Recent legislation passed allows the use of county and municipal roadway facilities for motorsports events. WVDOT maintains and owns county roads.



Safety was paramount during the event as Drift Appalachia signed an insurance policy and multiple waivers for the event. No spectators were allowed on the two-lane road. EMT, police, rescue, and other local officials were notified and on hand to help in any way.

"This event marks our second successful filming session utilizing public roads and the first event of its kind in West Virginia," said Jedediah Smith, West Virginia Operations Director for Backroads of Appalachia. "The public response has been overwhelmingly positive, and people are begging for more events like this along with other types of events."

"Backroads of Appalachia looks forward to forging a lasting relationship with the WVDOT and its partners to bring more motorsports events, demos, competitions, and more to West Virginia as well as the Appalachian region. We encourage everyone to follow Backroads of Appalachia and Drift Appalachia on all social media platforms to stay up to date on future opportunities."

Photos and videos of the drifting have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times on the Drift Appalachia and Backroads of Appalachia social media pages.

There was also a cruise-in and car parade into downtown Beckley following the event.



US 340 Opens Ahead of Schedule

US 340 near Harpers Ferry reopened Thursday, November 30, 2023 as contractors completed a major rock fall project about 10 days ahead of schedule.

The safety-centered project, which removed dangerous rocks and debris from the mountainside high above the road, began on September 12, 2023, and was projected to be a 90-day closure. With cooperation among multiple agencies, the roadway will reopen 10 days ahead of schedule.



Boulders the size of cars came down during the project, sometimes unexpectedly. That's why the WVDOH chose to close US 340 completely during the project instead of keeping one lane open. Crews have also repaired pavement and guardrail that was damaged from falling rock.

Approximately 2,300 cubic yards of rock equaling 3,530 tons was removed during

the project.

In May 2023, Triton Construction Inc. was awarded a contract for \$10,277,500 to remove rock and install rockfall barriers on a one-mile section of US 340 where it hugs the Shenandoah River just south of Harpers Ferry.

Triton removed loose material from multiple slopes at once, removing large rocks and boulders that threaten to fall, and installing mesh barriers and fences to catch any large rocks that may fall in the future. US 340 along the Shenandoah River was built in the mid-1950s. The cut slopes and exposed rock tower from 150 to more than 300 feet above the roadway.

In the past week, crews have worked on rumble strips, striping, and reflective pavement markers to complete the project.

The WVDOH took advantage of the road closure to also seal the deck on the bridge over the Shenandoah River, seal cracks on the existing pavement within the closure area, clean ditches and culverts, cut hazardous trees, and complete canopy clearing.

During the closure, the WVDOH also repaired two slips on Chestnut Hill Road, cleaned the ditches, and removed hazardous trees and canopy.

The WVDOH worked in partnership with the Virginia Department of Transportation, Maryland State Highway Administration, National Park Service, and all local and county officials for a collaborative and responsive approach to maintain traffic during construction.

Bridge Design Contest Underway

The qualifying round for the 23rd annual West Virginia Bridge Design & Build Contest is underway.

The contest, sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT), BridgeWalk, West Virginia Department of Education, and WVU Tech in Beckley, challenges middle and high school students to see who can design the lowest cost bridge using bridge design software developed for students. Finalists will also build a balsa bridge to see how much force the model will stand before collapsing.

"This STEM activity gives students a chance to try engineering in a fun and competitive environment," said Jennifer Dooley, a spokesperson with WVDOT. "All around our state, there are good careers available with WVDOT. Engineers are always in

demand. For over 20 years, we have hosted the competition to give students a chance to try their hand at something that may be new to them."

The contest is FREE and open to every middle school and high school student who attends any public, private or home school in West Virginia. Students have until Wednesday, March 1, 2024, to register, download their bridge design software and submit their bridge design. All materials for the competition, including a YouTube tutorial by Secretary of Transportation, Jimmy Wriston, are available on the website.

To register, download bridge design software, or find out more about the contest, visit <https://wvbridgedesignandbuildcontest.com>.



On the Road Again: Photo Feature



Canopy Clearing Begins

November marks the beginning of canopy clearing season for the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOT).

Canopy clearing is the act of cutting branches and brush that overhang the Mountain State's roadways, and it's a vital part of prolonging the life of the pavement on West Virginia's 36,000 miles of road.

"Water is a highway's worst enemy," said Joe Pack, P.E., WVDOT Chief Engineer of Operations. "Anything we can do to keep water off our roadways or to help dry up that water will prolong the life of that road."

Moisture left on pavement degrades asphalt fast, so maintenance crews cut away limbs and branches to allow sunlight to get to the roadways below.

"The canopy acts like a tent, literally trapping moisture on the roadway," Pack said.

By federal law, maintenance crews are only allowed to clear canopy between Nov. 15 and March 31. The restriction is in place to protect endangered bat populations, which don't typically use trees during those months.

Last year, the WVDOT set a goal of clearing 500 acres of canopy



during canopy clearing season. They ended up clearing more than 550 acres.

Maintenance crews use bucket trucks, chainsaws, pole saws and chippers to clear away branches and limbs and grind them up. Bucket trucks have a reach of 40 feet, but maintenance crews have pole saws that are up to 175 feet long for

reaching the highest branches.

Pack said the WVDOT has increased its budget for rental equipment to cut limbs and branches, including more than 20 Jarraff (pronounced "giraffe") tree trimmers. The trimmers have a rotating saw blade at the end of a long, extendable boom that allows work crews to more safely trim more than 50 feet in the air.

The increased budget has allowed the WVDOT to increase this year's trimming goal to 600 acres.

Five or 600 acres of canopy may not sound like a lot when spread over 55 counties, but the WVDOT clears canopy only along highway rights-of-way.

Last year, WVDOT cleared canopy along more than 430 miles of roadway, enough to stretch from Charleston to Myrtle Beach.

I-64 Widening in Final Phase

The night of Thursday, November 16, 2023, marked the last major phase of a project to widen Interstate 64 to eight lanes between East Mall Road in Barboursville and the Merritt's Creek interchange, as contractors begin shifting traffic for final construction.

The \$72 million project is paid for with funding from Gov. Jim Justice's \$2.8 billion Roads to Prosperity program, and is designed to ease congestion and remove a bottleneck for drivers travelling between Barboursville and Huntington.

Contractors will shift westbound traffic on I-64 onto freshly built pavement between 7 p.m. Thursday, November 16, 2023, and 6 a.m. Friday, November 17, 2023.

Eastbound traffic was to be shifted onto new pavement after the Thanksgiving holiday.

A concurrent, \$91 million project funded by Roads to Prosperity is widening I-64 to six lanes from Merritt's Creek to the 29th Street exit. Both projects are expected to be complete by late 2024.





When Gov. Jim Justice put the word out that he was looking for the perfect holiday tree to grace the State Capitol grounds, the West Virginia Division of Forestry knew just where to look. Forestry then teamed up with the Department of Commerce, General Services Division, and West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) to cut the tree and make arrangements to truck it to the state Capitol in Charleston.



“It was 26 degrees on the thermometer, with a wind chill of negative 11,” Loudin said. “The wind was blowing probably 15 or 20 miles per hour. It was cold.”

But you can’t just cut down a 50-foot tree and let it crash to the ground.

The tree was first lashed to a giant crane so that it would remain upright after the trunk was cut. Then it was gently laid onto wooden supports on a standard flatbed trailer for the trip

The 50-foot Balsam Fir arrived at the Capitol on Monday, November 27, 2023 from Kumbrabow State Forest.

Crews with the WVDOH laid in gravel and built a short log road to get a tractor trailer into the forest to haul out the tree, with the assistance of the Division of Forestry.

Dustin Loudin was part of the five-person WVDOH crew who got up at 4 a.m. to prepare the tree for transport. All were from the WVDOH Equipment Division in Buckhannon.

to Charleston.

“We were set up and ready to rock and roll at 7:15,” Loudin said. “We pulled out at 10 a.m.”

Loudin and the others then gingerly drove the tree out of the forest, onto WV 15 and to Valley Head, where they headed out US 219 to Lewisburg to catch Interstate 64 back to Charleston, where the tree arrived a little after 3 p.m.



It’s a season of giving and throughout the WVDOH, each District and Division has their favorite traditions. From Human Resources Divisions legendary canned food drive and basket fundraiser to Angel Trees and Toys-For-Tots, coat drives, mittens and socks --- there are opportunities galore to give, share and care!



Did you NOTICE?

The Business Manager’s Office, as well as the Budget, Procurement and Finance Divisions have moved. They are now located on the 3rd Floor of Building 6, at the State Capitol Complex. Building 6 connects to Building 5 with the shorter Building 7. Stop by and say hello!

New guests every week!
 Follow WV on the DOT on SoundCloud or Apple Podcasts.



DMV Debuts Clearinghouse

The West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is proud to announce that the National Digital Titling Clearinghouse is live and creating its first revenue for the state. Through the leadership of Gov. Jim Justice, West Virginia is once again leading the nation with its innovative title and registration technology.

The National Digital Titling Clearinghouse was originally initiated by the DMV's desire to improve customer service and make the titling process more streamlined and efficient. With Gov. Justice's support, DMV brought in Champ Titles, Inc. and its partner, Tyler Technologies, to work together to create the National Digital Titling Clearinghouse (NDTC (wv.gov)), a transformational tool for businesses around the country to acquire vehicles and avoid titling headaches that plague most states.

As dealers move more of their transactions online, the radius of where they acquire vehicles continues to expand across state borders. The Clearinghouse is the solution for these needs and many others.

"The Clearinghouse that Gov. Justice supported, and our great DMV implemented is now live! We are delighted to count Vroom as the first live user," said DMV Commissioner Everett Frazier. "With this step forward, the WV DMV and now Vroom continue to lead the digitization of the vehicle titling space for all dealers nationally. Consumers everywhere will have an improved vehicle buying experience because West Virginia has made acquiring titles so much easier for dealers as they acquire inventory from anyone, anywhere in the country."

Vehicle acquisition, same-party title rebranding, and unrecovered theft reporting are currently possible through the Clearinghouse.

The National Digital Title Clearinghouse will continue to roll out new transaction types for businesses all around the country in the months to come.

For more information on the National Digital Title Clearinghouse visit NDTC (wv.gov), or email the Clearinghouse directly at dmvtitlclearinghouse@wv.gov.

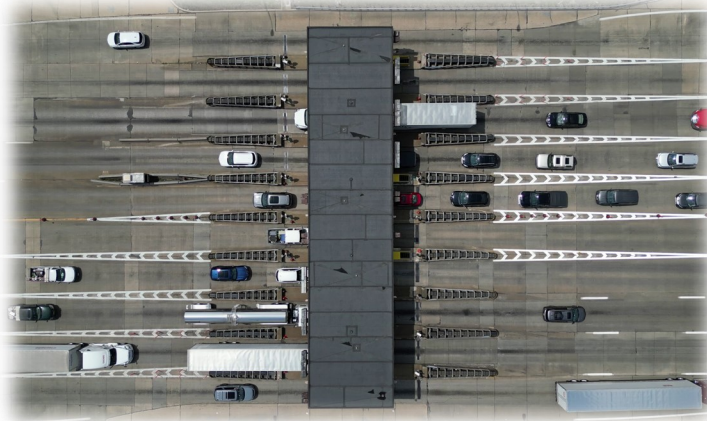
Thanksgiving Traffic Over Estimate

More than 724,000 total transactions were completed on the West Virginia Turnpike during the Thanksgiving holiday period from Tuesday, November 21, 2023, to Sunday, November 26, 2023.

West Virginia Parkways Authority reports 724,768 total transactions took place between the three toll booths on the turnpike during the holiday period, nearly 10,000 transactions above estimates.

"The WV Turnpike was well prepared for a heavy influx of traffic during Thanksgiving week," said Jeff Miller, executive director of the West Virginia Parkways Authority. "I couldn't be prouder of our Toll Operations, Maintenance crews, Courtesy patrol, Traffic Flaggers, State Police Troop 7, and Dispatch Center for their commitment this week to ensure traffic ran as smoothly as possible."

Sunday, November 26, 2023, was the busiest day on the



Turnpike, with 161,022 total transactions, above the 160,000 estimated total. Wednesday, November 22, 2023, was the second busiest day on the turnpike with 156,241 total transactions which was above the 155,000 estimated total.

132,053 total transactions took place on the turnpike on Tuesday November 21, 2023,

above the 130,000 total transactions estimation. Toll collectors on the turnpike recorded 128,818 total transactions on Saturday November 25, 2023, above an estimated 125,000, and 83,370 total transactions on Friday, November 24, 2023, above an estimated 80,000.

There were 67,695 total transactions on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 23, 2023.

The West Virginia Turnpike averages nearly 100,000 total transactions per day for the entire year.



Leading by Example: Working His Way Up

Arlie Matney started his career as a flagger in 1989, and led through inspiration and good spirit every step of the way. He retires this month, as District 1 Manager.

We asked some of those who worked closely with Arlie to share their experiences:

"I started as maintenance assistant at Chelyan headquarters with Arlie training me. I was a bit on edge due to starting in a management position. What I recall most of all is that when I would make the wrong decision, Arlie would set down and smile at me and say, "Are you sure you want to do it that way?" Arlie never once got loud or beat his fist on the desk. Arlie not only was a great trainer he became one of my best friends. Arlie has continued to guide and direct our group with a smile on his face and soft corrective words."

--Stefan White

"Arlie - congratulations on your retirement! Working with you has been a true pleasure, in big part due to the atmosphere of teamwork and respect that you instilled at D1. You are a great example of how valuing our most important resource, WVDOH employees, leads to success. Best of luck for many happy and healthy years with Karen and Karlie!"

--Kathy Rushworth



Human Resources Food Drive Continues through December 14

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) Human Resources Division (HR) canned food drive continues through Thursday, December 14, 2023, in Building 5 of the West Virginia Capitol Complex. Employees are encouraged to donate food products to help the needy while getting a chance to win one of eight special gift baskets created by WVDOT staff.

Canned food and canned pet food can be donated at the HR reception desk on the 4th floor of building 5 between 7:30AM and 4:00PM, Monday-Friday. Let's see how much we can donate to our local organizations as the need is often greater during the holiday season. For each canned food or canned pet food item donated, you will receive one ticket to use for the basket giveaway. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Kathryn Hill Kathryn.L.Hill@wv.gov or Jessica Legg (Jessica.A.Legg@wv.gov) Thank you all for your help, and happy holidays!





At WVDOT, we are often impressed by the work of our co-workers from throughout the team of 6,000 employees statewide. We're impressed with those who work alongside us daily, and those from other Divisions, Districts and Agencies who assist us with specialized work. When YOU are impressed by someone's work, write in to the newsletter and share.

From District 4 Manager, Mike Daley—

We recently had Cenforce perform some work in District 4, and the office staff from the county reached out to me to compliment the crew that worked there because of their exceptional communication skills while assisting in District 4. The quality of work was superb as usual, but the clear and timely communication allowed for better collaboration. They borrowed some equipment from D4, and the staff received charges and hours for the equipment daily as well as inventory usages.

Cenforce employees Larry Day, Christopher Conrad, Bradley Hart, Nick Pennington, and Arthur Mitchell exemplified both teamwork and cooperation, proving that we are more than just an organization or district. When we asked for help, they rose to the challenge nicely.

Thank you for all that you do.

VISION AWARDS

Congratulations to the following individuals being recognized this month by Secretary Wriston for their dedication to The Vision.

Russ Hoover — District 1

Doug Carden — District 10

Greg Bishop — District 2

Mike Bradley — Payroll

Caitlin Coyne — Payroll

Dustin Bragg—D9

Jason Mundell—District 9, CenForce

The Vision is simple; to be the best DOT in the country, for the purpose of giving our West Virginia the chance it should have — a place of prosperity and joy, where citizens have the best chance to build the lives they hope for. To be the best DOT in the country based on the quality of our work and motivation. To be the safest place for our employees to work. To be the best trained, and most educated.

To go Above and Beyond, every day.

I ~~Just~~ Work Here!

